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Editorial – For Love or Money?

One of the more unfortunate features of our life and times is the increasing difficulty of finding anybody willing to do anything without being paid for it, preferably at the going rate or better. This is perhaps not surprising in respect of daily toil or labour involving the sweat of the brow or the mobilizing of the mind but it becomes somewhat absurd when extended to such supposedly enjoyable activities as the playing of games and even to being entertained. This situation arose as a side effect from the efforts of organized labour to improve the lot of the so-called working classes. They have been laudable efforts, towards an objective with which I have no quarrel; but I have said so-called working classes because I think this term needs re-definition for our present day and age. It was introduced at a time when the population of many countries could be divided into two groups, one much larger and less influential, those who worked for a living; and the idle rich. In our present day populations we have plenty of idle and plenty of rich but these two qualities are less frequently found in the same person than they used to be. The so-called working class of today includes a substantial segment, perhaps best referred to as the idle poor, who no longer work

but who apparently enjoy a modest existence on funds from welfare, unemployment insurance, or some more oblique dispensation of the taxpayer's money. It seems necessary to assure that such people either do not like work of any kind or at least have been unable to secure work of a kind which they might enjoy. We may mention in passing that management involves work.

Another result of the efforts of organized labour to improve the lot of the working classes has been to change the meaning of the terms professional and amateur so that they become essentially antithetic. A person who gets paid for what he does is a professional, a person who does not is an amateur. In their original meanings these words were far from antithetic. Professional meant simply a person, who, by public declaration or otherwise through his training or official qualifications, indicated his intention and presumably ability to fulfil a certain role. An amateur was a person who filled a certain role, although perhaps not one recognized by society, simply because he loved filling it. The assumption that a person who does something without being paid for it loves doing it, may or may not be justified. A third pair of meanings of these two terms, also antithetic and recently acquired, makes the professional a person who does a good job and the amateur a person who does an indifferent one. These last meanings are in direct conflict with the original ones since, in my experience, one is more likely to get good work done by a person who loves doing it than by a person who is merely doing it for the money. It is principally for this reason that it is unfortunate that people willing to do things without being paid for it are becoming increasingly scarce.

While entomology has certainly not been immune to the reduction in its population of amateurs, it is my impression that it has suffered less than most other branches of scientific work. Certainly it appears likely that there will be plenty of opportunity for amateurs, in the two best senses of the word, to work in the field of entomology for many years to come. This has many advantages. In the first place, amateurs in a field help to keep it in touch with the public. Perhaps more important is the increasing proportion of our time available for leisure activities promised us by technological advance for some time now, though many of us see little sign of fulfillment of this promise. One of the dangers of this increased leisure is that it can lead people to accept, by way of regular employment, something which they are not really interested in doing, thus increasing the risk of them becoming members of the idle poor. Since routine, humdrum, repetitive occupations are clearly those most readily taken over by machines and computers, it would seem reasonable to expect technological advance to make it easier for people to find more enjoyable and interesting occupations than in earlier days, but there is no clear evidence that this is so. Perhaps this is because there are too many people and not enough things that need doing. Or could it be that the possibility of survival without work has been selecting for survival those people who can get no enjoyment out of work of any kind, the hard-core of the idle poor? If so, what price a guaranteed minimum income? I would suggest the smaller the price, the better. Amateurs, in the original sense, are enthusiastic people; enthusiasm is infectious and one of the most important qualities to be sought in a teacher.

Dr. Ruby Larson has always been an enthusiastic person. Her first employment was as an impoverished country school teacher in Saskatchewan. From that position, she took a summer school course in biology from Dr. J. G. Rempel, then Professor of Biology at the University of Saskatchewan, now fulfilling a similar role from retirement at the University of Victoria. This convinced her that biological research was the most exciting occupation in the world. While a student at the university, she found summer employment counting wheat chromosomes at the Swift Current Experimental Station of the Canada Department of Agriculture in connection with the cereal breeding work being conducted there by A. W. Platt and Chris Farstad. This eventually led to her appointment as a cytogeneticist and her work

in this field in relation to the resistance of plants to insect and other damage is well known. Nobody however, who has been in contact with Dr. J. G. Rempel could escape some enthusiasm for entomology. These two enthusiasms still constituted only a part of the total enthusiasm which Dr. Larson put into the formation and operation of the Junior Science Club of Lethbridge. Characteristically, she attributes the success of this club to the young people who joined it but, going back to first principles, the young people who joined it did so because of her enthusiasm. This enthusiasm also drew collateral support for the Club from her colleagues at the Canada Department of Agriculture Research Station in Lethbridge and elsewhere.

The authors of all three papers in this issue of *Quaestiones entomologicae* were members of Dr. Ruby Larson's Junior Science Club of Lethbridge. As she puts it, the remarkable thing is not that they became entomologists, that was inevitable, but that all three of them have followed their first main interest; David Larson with his beetles mainly because of their beautiful structure; Ken Richards with his bees partly because of his association with Gordon Hobbs; and Joe Shorthouse with his insect galls. It is of special interest that the Larson paper is doubly amateur, representing as it does, the work of J. B. Wallis, in his day one of Canada's leading amateur entomologists. The breadth of interest of the Club is reflected in the fact that doctors, teachers, architects and engineers, in addition to entomologists, have come from among its members. It is for this and other reasons that we are pleased and proud to dedicate this issue of *Quaestiones entomologicae* to Dr. Ruby Larson, personality, teacher, scientist, biologist, cytogeneticist, and entomologist; professional and amateur, in the best senses of both words, in all of these fields.

The story of Ruby Larson is a story of what the enthusiasm of an amateur, in the original sense of the word, can accomplish. It is also a story of the influences of teachers on students, Rempel, via Larson, on many others. Such influences, as H. T. Pledge has pointed out in his book, *Science since 1500*, have played a tremendous role in the history of science. It is also a story which demonstrates for the benefit of teachers at all levels, the vital importance of enthusiasm.

Education of today, especially at the university level, must be flexible to be fair to students who may be degree-labelled for life; they must have an opportunity to pursue that which they really wish to pursue. But to be fair to the society in which these students will have to find employment as well as to the student, it must also be broad, for despite technological advances we have a long way to go before our societies can accommodate a life of activity on a specific individual interest for each and every one of its members. The most important thing to ask of life is the opportunity to do that which one is most interested in doing; preferably to get paid for doing it but, to do it anyway. All too often, life will say no; but love will find out the way.

Brian Hocking

